

October 16, 2006

To: California Building Standards Commission
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(However, these are my personal contributions and in no way necessarily represent the opinions of the organizations listed above. They are listed only as a reference to my qualifications)

I do not agree with The Agency proposed modifications As Submitted on the sections listed below and request that these sections or reference provisions be recommended to be approved amended as I am suggesting.

In general, my reasons are to provide more continuity, clarity and consistency to the code, which I believe has financial benefits to building owners, to designers and builders, and which also results in improved accessibility to the population served. Although I could list almost every one of the nine criteria, in general, these amendments best serve (3) the public interest.

A few of the changes are editorial in nature only, and I hope will be referred to staff to make corrections. These are marked "Editorial."

2006 California Building Standards Administrative Code with CA Amendments
Chapter 5
Access to Public Buildings by Persons with Disabilities
Article 1 Compliance Procedures

General Comment: I am somewhat apprehensive about the removal of a specific Access Compliance Section of the DSA, with a Chief. In my experience, when there is no dedicated division, department or person in charge of access, less attention is paid to issues, and personnel do not have the in depth knowledge required. This is a large state with a huge budget and many access issues. It deserves a dedicated department at the Division of the State Architect, in my opinion.

Consistent Terminology: Sanitary Facilities:

Since the defined term for toilet rooms, bath rooms, showers and lavatories is "sanitary facilities," why do some sections of the code refer, instead, to toilet rooms and bathrooms?

See: 2006 Uniform Plumbing Code, Chapter 3, 412.1.1, 2006 International Building Code with CA Amendments, Chapter 11B, 1109B.5, 1110B1.1, 1111B.4.6, 1134B.2.2

2006 International Building Code with CA Amendments, Chapter 1

109.1.2 Application. See Health and Safety Code commencing with Section 19952. All privately funded public accommodations, as defined, and commercial facilities, as defined, shall be accessible to persons with ~~physical~~ disabilities as follows: . . .

Reason: The term "physical disabilities" is more limiting than the Americans with Disabilities Act. Access is not limited to those with "physical" disabilities. This term has been removed in other sections of the code.

Chapter 9 Fire Protection Systems

907.9.1.5 Group L-1, R-3.1 and R-4.

(Editorial Only) Protective social care facilities which house persons ~~which~~ who are hearing impaired, . . .

Reason: "which" is for objects, not persons

Chapter 10

1007.7 Signage . . . Signs shall comply with Chapter 11A or Chapter 11B, Section 1117B.5.1 Items 2 and 3., ~~as applicable.~~

Reason: If this means the applicable section of Item 3, then it should say so. This implies that either Item 2 or Item 3 might be applicable. Actually, both are applicable.

1008.1.8.6 Delayed egress locks.

5. . . . A tactile sign shall also be provided in Braille and raised characters, stating "KEEP PUSHING, DOOR WILL OPEN IN 15 [30] SECONDS. " which complies with Section 1117B.5.1 Item 1 ~~and 1117B.5.5 Item 4.~~

Reason: Section 1117B.5.1 Item 1 includes all items from 1117B.5.5 so there is no need to list it separately.

1020.1 Enclosures required Tactile floor designation signs in stairways. ~~(When accessibility is required, t~~ Tactile floor designation signs that comply with 1117B.5.1 Item 1 shall be located at the landing of each floor level . . .

Reason: Who is to determine if accessibility is required? I believe that accessible signage is always required for spaces identified by numbers. Since floors are identified by numbers, doors leading from enclosed stairwells onto numbered floors require tactile identification.

Section 1102B Definitions

(Editorial only) COMMON USE AREAS are public areas where the uses of the space is not limited exclusively to owners, residents or individual employees.

Reason: agreement of subject and verb

(Editorial only) WALK is a surfaced pedestrian way not located contiguous to a street used . . .

Reason: It appears that someone forgot to cross out the word "used."

1110B1.3 Check stands. . . . and shall be identified by a sign clearly visible to those in wheelchairs. The sign shall display the international symbol of accessibility in white on a blue background that complies with 1117.5.8 and shall state "This check stand to be open at all times for customers with disabilities," in text that complies with 1117.5.1 Item 2.

Reason: All signage requirements should refer to the appropriate sections of the codes. This prevents uncertainty and confusion on the part of designers and owners, and encourages uniformity that aids consumers.

1116B.1.9 Car Controls. Identification for the visually impaired shall be as follows: . . . All control buttons shall be designated by 5/8-inch-minimum (15.9 mm) raised characters and standard raised symbols that conform to Section(s) 1117B.5.1, Item 1 ~~1117B.5.2, 1117B.5.3, 1117B.5.5 and 1117B.5.7.~~ immediately to the left of the control button. . . .

Reason: Most other references to the sign codes refer to the item (in this case Item 1) that covers the specific type of signage. If this reference is used, there is no need to list the separate parts of the code. See the referenced code below:

1117B.5.1 General

1. Identification signs. When signs identify permanent rooms and spaces of a building or site, they shall comply with Sections 1117B.5.2, 1117B.5.3, 1117B.5.5, 1117B 5.6 and 1117B.5.7. . . See also Section 1116B for additional signage requirements applicable to elevators . . .

1116B.1.14 Doorjamb marking. . .

(Editorial Only) ~~Permanently a~~Applied plates are acceptable if they are permanently fixed to the jambs.

Reason: Redundant language needs to be fixed. It's impossible to have permanently applied plates that are NOT permanently fixed.

(ADA Certification Section) 1117B5.8.1.3 Information posted. . . shall have this information posted in the building lobby, preferably as part of the building directory, or, if there is no lobby, at the building or facility entrance or other prominent location. The information text shall comply with 1117B.5.1.2 and shall be accompanied by the International Symbol of Accessibility, in compliance with 1117B.5.8. Inaccessible toilet and bathing sanitary facilities shall have directional signage complying with 1117B.5.1 Items 2 and 3 to indicate the location of the nearest accessible ~~toilet and bathing~~ sanitary facility.

Reason: This was originally written with office buildings in mind, but should also be used for facilities such as schools and other building and facilities which often don't have lobbies. Also, all signage references should list the sign sections that are applicable, and since the defined terminology is "sanitary facility," it should be consistently used throughout the code to refer, generally, to such facilities.

I also have a number of other items that I think require changes. I plan to submit these to the Division of the State Architect, but would like the Building Standards Commission to be aware of these items. There are a few of them that I think are important enough to require some interpretive material, since there are constant misinterpretations of these items. I did not submit them above, because it is my understanding that no changed language was submitted for these items, and therefore, they are not able to be considered at this time. However, if staff determines that any of them are able to be changed this cycle, consider them submitted.

1104B.3.4 Wheelchair spaces. . . . Each such seat shall be identified by a sign or marker. Signage notifying patrons of the availability of such seats shall be posted at the ticket office. Signs and markers shall comply with 1115B.5.1 Item 2 and Item 3.

Reason: All references to signs should include the relevant code sections.

1104B.4.3 Participation areas.

4. Swimming pool deck areas ~~must~~ shall be accessible, (In all following sections, substitute "shall" for "must.")

Reason: "must" is not enforceable code language.

1115B.5 (1115.B.6) Identification Symbols. . . . Unisex sanitary facilities shall be identified by a circle 1/4 inch thick (6.4 mm), 12 inches (305 mm) in diameter with a 1/4-inch thick (6.4 mm) triangle superimposed on the circle and within the 12-inch (305 mm) diameter, that contrasts, dark on light or light on dark with the circle. These geometric symbols shall be centered on the door at a height of 60 inches (1524 mm) and their color and contrast shall be distinctly different from the color and contrast of the door. . . .

Reason: When the triangle is the same color as the circle, which is often the case, it is essentially invisible to persons with vision impairments, and the restroom thus appears to be a facility for females rather than a unisex facility. This can be dealt with in an interpretive or technical assistance manual, or with a code change, but it was certainly the intent of the original code to have the triangle be distinct from the circle, and not "invisible." I consider this to be a very important item.

1116B.1.14 Doorjamb marking. Passenger elevator landing jambs on all elevator floors shall have the number of the floor on which the jamb is located designated by raised characters that are a minimum of 2 inches (51 mm) in height, and Grade 2 Braille, that and conform to Section 1117B.5.1 Item 1. ~~4117B.5.5 and Grade 2 Braille that conforms to Section 1117B.5.6~~ located 60 inches on center . . .

~~The raised characters shall otherwise comply with Sections 1117B.5.3, 1117B.5.4 and 4117B.5.2.~~ See Figure 11B-40C.

Reason: By referring to the general section on raised and Braille identification signs, (Item 1), there is no need to list all the sections separately, and to add the final sentence. It is all covered with the one reference. Uniformity in code reference will help eliminate confusion among persons attempting to understand the code.

1117B.2.9.2 General. Text telephones shall comply with the following requirements. . . . Directional signage shall comply with Section 1117B.5.1 Item 2 and 3.

Reason: The reference to the sign sections is too general. Too often, the assumption is that tactile and Braille signs are required -- particularly useless for the users of text telephones! The correct section of the code should always be referenced.

1117B.5 Signs and Identification. California's standards for signage are more stringent ~~and are significantly larger and wider than Federal law, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)~~ than Section 4.30 of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines.

Reason: This statement is not only ungrammatical and inaccurate in its reference, but misleading. It is true that California Braille standards produce Braille words that "stretch out" further than the Braille produced by the Library of Congress standard (never cited in 4.30 ADAAG, which does not require any specific size or spacing for Braille). The Braille is not "larger" and the code itself is not "larger and wider," since code can't be "wider," although it could be "broader." Let's clear up this embarrassing garbled language! (And as soon as the new ADA/ABA is passed, California's code will be "significantly smaller and narrower" anyway!)

1117B.5.7 Mounting location and height. . . . Where there is no wall space on the latch side, including at double leaf doors, signs shall be placed on the nearest adjacent wall, preferably on the right. Signs shall be placed with the edge of the sign nearest the

door jamb a minimum of 12 inches from the door they identify, In no case shall a sign be placed closer to a door it does not identify than to the door it does identify.

Reason: We are finding an increasing number of situations where the sign has to be placed so far from the door that it no longer has any connection to that room. That is misleading to everyone, both sighted and blind. It is preferable to have a visual sign in close proximity to the room it identifies, rather than a tactile sign two feet away, or next to a room it does not identify. The first consideration should always be safety, so that no one will be hit by the door while reading the sign.

1117B.5.7 (continued) . . . Mounting location shall be determined so that a person may approach within 3 inches (76 mm) of signage without encountering protruding objects or standing within the swing of the door. Signs containing tactile characters shall be located so that a clear floor space of 18 inches (455 mm) minimum by 18 inches (455 mm) minimum, centered on the tactile characters, is provided beyond the arc of any door swing between the closed position and 45 degree open position.

Reason: Too many people read this as meaning that the sign must be located 3 inches from the door jamb. By extending the code with the measurable 18 inch space, it now becomes easy to measure the area for installing the sign. I really consider this an important public safety issue, since these signs excite the curiosity of sighted readers, as well as providing identification for persons who are blind, and a suddenly opening door could severely injure anyone up close reading or touching a sign. Perhaps the mention of the 18 inch space might remind designers and building owners not to install tack boards, lockers and tables too close to doors and to leave adequate space for tactile sign installation.

1133B.4.3 Tactile ~~stair level identification~~ floor number signs signage. Tactile ~~stair floor designation~~ level identification signs that comply with Section 1117B.5 Item 1 shall be located at each floor level landing in all enclosed stairways . . .

Reason: In another section of the code, (Section 1020.1.6) this was properly changed to reflect that what was actually being identified was the floor number. The two sections should be consistent in terminology.

(Editorial Only) 1133B4.4 Striping for the visually impaired. The upper approach and the lower tread of each stair shall be marked by a ~~strip~~ stripe of clearly contrasting color . . . (throughout, substitute "stripe" for "strip.")

Reason: When you "stripe," you make or use "stripes, not "strips." The figure also refers to "stripes" rather than "strips."

Respectfully Submitted
Sharon Toji